

7 Uj YfhCatholic School's Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, healthful foods and physical activity promotes weight control and correct bodily functioning;

Whereas, community participation is an essential element in the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Whereas, this policy provides an assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779) and sections 9(f)(1) and 17(a) of Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1785(f)(1), 1776(a)), as those regulations and guidance apply to schools;

Policy Goals

We the Catholic Schools are committed to providing an environment conducive to children's overall health by implementing health nutrition information and physical activity opportunities. Therefore, it is the policy of the Catholic Schools that:

- Help students acquire the desire to eat healthy and stay active.
- Engage students, administration, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals and interested community members in developing, implementing and reviewing district wide nutrition and physical activities policies.
- All students in grades K-12 will be provided with daily encouragement to be physically active.
- All students will have access to foods and beverages at school that meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- We will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- We will participate in available federal school meal programs that pertain to our system.
- Our schools will have nutrition education and physical education available to all our students to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical participation, and provide a connection between health, nutrition, and community opportunities.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Councils

Calvert Catholic Schools and/or individual school buildings within the district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- serve low-fat and fat-free milk; and
- ensure that some of the served grains are whole grain.

Schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

Meal Times and Scheduling.

Schools:

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;

- should not schedule meetings during mealtimes, unless students may eat during meeting;
- will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary grades);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

School Food Service Staff. Cafeteria manager will administer the school meal programs. They will provide continuing nutritional development. Also, staff development programs should include training programs for cafeteria workers and volunteers.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte lines.)

Elementary Schools. The school health council will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students during school hours in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should include low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Middle/Junior High and High Schools. In middle/junior high and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte lines, vending machines) during the school day will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- Allowed: water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain fruit juice; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- Not allowed: soft drinks.

Foods/Snacks

- When food items are sold individually, healthy choices will be included.

Snacks. Encourage healthy snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs. This will be done through education and implementation according to each building's needs.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Calvert Catholic Schools aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is integrated into the classroom as teachers feel it fits the acceptable curriculum;
- is part of health education classes;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and health-enhancing nutrition practices; and
- includes education for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce health risk by also educating children on the health risk of too much time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be integrated into other subject lessons as appropriate; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. The schools will keep the parents informed of the School Wellness Policies practices either by periodic newsletters or information posted on the schools' websites.

The schools will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, will receive physical education. A qualified physical education teacher will teach all physical education in accordance with Diocesan Course of Study Guidelines.

Daily Recess. All elementary students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised, outdoor (weather permitting) recess, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should discourage extended periods of inactivity.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. Calvert Catholic Schools will offer a range of extracurricular activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students.

After-school child care will provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students and staff, before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations pending availability and proper authorization. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The superintendent will ensure compliance with established system-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent.

School food service staff, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the school principal.

The superintendent will develop a summary report every three years on system-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the system if so requested.

Policy Review. To help with the development of the Calvert Catholic Schools' wellness policies, each building will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the health council will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The individual school buildings can, as necessary, include specific building objectives to this wellness policy and develop plans to facilitate their implementation.